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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

It is held that the public schools are one of the most strategically placed staging areas from which to mount vigorous, comprehensive and preventive programs to achieve the maximum development of the human potential lying unchallenged in urban slum and depressed areas. Strong criticism has been directed toward schools for neglecting their job of training the mind. In answer to such criticism it is necessary to understand the two types of schools found in cities. One type, the "steady schools," is attended by children who are steadily improving and are steadily supported by middle class parents. For these schools learning is the major task. The second type is attended by a large number of students characterized by performance below grade level, serious classroom behavior problems, high rates of pupil transfers, poor motivation, and high dropout rate. Parents of students in the second type of school usually have a low socio-economic status, and there are large numbers of broken homes. In planning for these schools many factors besides academic development must be considered.

New directions for improvement in urban slum schools include: development of curricula and teaching techniques to foster language development; flexible school programming to allow for in-service training; development of more suitable reading materials; the expansion of clinical opportunities for future teachers; and development of training institutions for preparing urban school teachers. An important facet of improved urban programs is the active partnerships between the school and other public and private agencies involved in rendering services to the community. Community schools, operating seven days a week for use by social agencies, health agencies, and interested citizens, are the result of such partnerships.

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HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

THE GREAT CITIES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

New Directions for the School in a Changing Neighborhood

Henry Saltzman

ED001038

(Text of Talk - National Conference on Social Welfare, Minneapolis, Minnesota - May 15, 1961)

The roots of the problems of people living in the core and gray areas of our cities reach to the bedrock of our social problems - poverty, poor housing, prejudice, delinquency, transiency, family and neighborhood disorganization. In the array of services and institutions seeking to improve the quality of living in these urban depressed areas, the centrality, if not primacy, of the schools is clear.

The positive effects of education are obvious. When we can effectively teach the lower class child, the opportunities for his economic and social improvement greatly increase. This fact alone makes the role of the school of great relevance to all efforts in the gray areas. But of equal importance in assessing the functions of schools is the singular lack of option which the institution of public education has been given. No "case" can be closed for lack of co-operation. No client can be turned away as "obviously unsuited to receive treatment." No building can be closed in order to follow the more desirable clients. We in the public schools cannot pick and choose; we cannot write off; we cannot retreat.

The public schools, therefore, are one of the most strategically placed staging areas from which to mount vigorous, comprehensive and preventive

programs to achieve the maximum development of much of the human potential lying dormant and unchallenged in our urban slums and gray areas.

I should like to make as real as possible to you the problems of the schools involved in the Great Cities-Gray Areas program of the Ford Foundation, and, indeed, all the schools in our large and small cities who serve the poor, the deprived, and the alienated. Let me chart our "sea of troubles" by a reference to two human beings rather than by tables, graphs, or statistical extrapolations.

A year ago, as director of the Bedford-Stuyvesant School in Brooklyn, New York, I was interviewing applicants for a special summer program we were to run in collaboration with the Institute for Developmental Studies of the Downstate Medical College. We were going to test the effect of a mild tranquilizer in a program of remedial reading for underachieving children. Lists of such children had been provided us by the local public schools and we sent cards to the parents informing them of the program.

Among the first to respond and appear for an interview were Mrs. Annie Duncan and her son, Johnny. From the interview I learned that Mrs. Duncan had been born in a small rural Mississippi town; she had never gone to school and was illiterate; she had eight children living with her; she had never been married; she was receiving welfare.

After listening to an explanation of the nature of the program, and agreeing to let Johnny participate, she had to sign a permission slip to allow for the administration of the drug. Without thinking, I pushed a pencil and the form across the desk to her.

The woman was transfixed. She began to tremble visibly. Perspiration beaded her forehead. Forcing herself, she reached spasmodically for the pencil - and missed - gouging a sliver of wood from the desk top with her fingernail.

Mrs. Duncan finally signed the paper. Johnny, who was 10 and already three years below grade level in reading, attended classes and improved in his reading ability.

It is not difficult for social workers to conjure up an image of Mrs. Duncan's life - its drabness, its unrelieved poverty, its unremitting isolation from culture, beauty, comfort; its meager and ofttimes immoral or unhealthy consolations. And yet, from this morass, emerged a mother willing to undergo the agonies of exposure to push her child's education along.

The schools engaged in our program recognize that Johnny cannot be the sole target of our effort nor the sole participant in the program. We recognize that the Johnny Duncans, the Johnny Gonzales's, the Johnny Whitefeathers, and the Johnny Calhouns are caught in a tempest of family and community forces impinging on their learning abilities and negating and diffusing the school's efforts. Thus, we must extend our program beyond the school child to reach the parents, their peer groups, and improve the social and cultural climate of the neighborhood.

Before describing the program, it may be well to address a few remarks to a question often raised by professional workers in other fields when a school man outlines broad social objectives for school programs which go

beyond the formal education process. That is, "Is this expanded role a proper one for the public school?"

We have certainly been lambasted of late by spokesmen from without as well as from within our guild for "neglect" of our job which is to train the mind. We have, in effect, been told to leave social work to the social workers and get back to teaching.

Let us try to settle this matter by recognizing that while we have one Board of Education in our cities, we have two school systems, or perhaps more accurately, two communities of schools. One of these communities consists of what I shall call the steady schools - steadily attended by children who are steadily improving their learning performance and who are steadily supported by parents who, in turn, steadily adhere to American middle class standards. For such a community of schools, learning is the first order of business.

The second community of schools is the one rapidly expanding in our core and gray areas. In these schools we find high rates of pupil tra[illegible] (as much as 100% in some), large numbers of students performing considerably below grade level in reading and arithmetic, serious classroom behavior problems, a variety of health problems affecting learning capacities, very high drop out rates, large numbers of subject failures, poorly motivated pupils, many emotionally disturbed pupils. Among the families of these children we find large numbers of broken homes, chronically unemployed fathers, high disease rates, large families living in the poorest housing facilities,

low educational levels, and high adult and infant mortality rates. These conditions are the by-products of impoverished neighborhoods, disorganized and voiceless in the urban community, ripe for demagoguery, and alienated from many of the political and welfare institutions able to help.

So long as we continue to plan for both of these communities of schools as if they were one, we shall, I submit, continue to play a game of educational charades and we shall continue to be frustrated because these schools do not conform to the desired mold. Therefore, I believe it is legitimate for school planners and administrators to go beyond the traditional programs and operate with a different set of priorities if we are ever to move forward with the serious and difficult business of training the minds of lower class, deprived children.

The forty-one public schools located in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Buffalo, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. who are participating in the Great Cities-Gray Areas program all face the complex and distressing syndromes of problems described above. To forge a more effective program, they have established the following set of common concerns above and beyond their traditional educational objectives:

1. the school shall be concerned with the quality of family and community life where it is detrimental to the learning and school adjustment of the child.
2. the school shall realistically assess the kinds of services needed

by the slum child and his family and be willing to render these services if other agencies are inadequate,

3. the school shall make a realistic effort to provide programs for adults in basic education and in the facts of urban living so that parents may become more supportive of their children,
4. the school shall actively seek partnerships with the other public and private agencies rendering needed services to the gray areas. These partnerships should enable all concerned to do their respective jobs more effectively.
5. the school shall seek ways of involving neighborhood residents more meaningfully and more actively in the program.
6. the school shall be particularly concerned with the in-migrant child and his family and develop better programs to facilitate their urbanization.
7. the school shall provide greater access to cultural, service, and work experiences which will broaden expectations and increase the motivation to learn, and develop suitable skills and attitudes.
8. the school shall put heavier emphasis on the teaching of communication skills, recognizing the fact that only through skill in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and seeing can one hope to improve one's social, educational and economic position.
9. the school shall be concerned with the continuing education of teachers because only through their deeper knowledge and greater skill can education ultimately be improved,

10. the school shall recognize that the per pupil dollar cost of educating the deprived youngsters must exceed that spent on the "average" youngster. The effective gray area program is a costly one.

Rather than describe each of the projects, or attempt a synopsis which would be clogged with education's unfortunate jargon, I have prepared an appendix, copies of which are available, in which you will find brief descriptive analyses of the projects and special personnel involved. Also, the names and addresses of the project directors are included if you should wish to write for more detailed information.

Let me take only one of the ten common concerns which I think will be of interest and describe some of the efforts being made. That is, the development of active partnerships with other agencies.

We all know that many such relationships already exist - most strongly and effectively between schools and other public agencies such as a recreation department or juvenile court. Liaisons between schools and the non-public agencies are apt to be irregular, unsustained, and not particularly advantageous to the smaller agency which has enough of a caseload of non-school referrals. However, in both cases, it would be safe to say that these communications and inter-relationships tend to develop at the needs end of the school program rather than at the planning end. In other words, we turn to other agencies when we need help; we rarely involve them when we are planning our new schools or our school services.

Over and over again, in our discussions with the school staffs involved in our program, the need for involving other interested agencies who have talents to offer has been stressed. Our school people have been receptive and some interesting developments have occurred.

In one city, some twenty-four private agencies, under the aegis of the Health and Welfare Federation, have been holding meetings with the school staff to explore ways of combining agency and school programs in mutually supportive ways. In addition, the County Health Department has made and is continuing to make expanded and improved services available to the project schools. Local settlement houses and Boys Clubs have also been consulting with the schools to develop co-operative programs. An urban renewal agency, developing neighborhood conservation and community organization programs in a newly developing "gray area" has been actively discussing with the school superintendent and his staff ways in which the two programs can complement and strengthen one another.

In two cities, the Superintendents of schools have called meetings of the Commissioners of the municipal agencies as well as the executive directors of private and federal agencies. The purpose of these meetings was to initiate a process of planning to develop an experimental master social plan for a problem area which would involve the redesign of services already present. This effort might be described as an Operation Better rather than an Operation More. In each case, direct participation by the chief administrative officer of the city is involved.

In another large city, the services of several group work agencies, long experienced in the neighborhoods served by the project schools, were tapped for workshops and short training sessions with teachers and special project personnel. In addition, an expanded after school activities program for children and adults is offering additional opportunities for agency staff to work with groups of parents in less formal settings.

Citizens groups such as block clubs, community councils, and special interest groups have become involved in a number of cities. In these situations, the indigenous groups were given a thorough briefing of the nature of the schools' effort and their support and involvement was solicited. In a number of instances, this effort has resulted in direct participation of interested citizens in various phases of the school program.

In another city, a settlement house which operates a camping program has offered its facilities for an experiment in educational camping for project pupils.

Another slum community, which has developed a number of community councils under the leadership of the Health and Welfare Federation, is actively planning with the project staffs ways of better utilizing existing facilities toward the end of making all agency programs more effective.

If we in the schools are going to be true to our stated purpose of reaching beyond the child to the parent and the community, these liaisons with other agencies become critically important. Without continuing and mutually supportive inter-agency programming, we cannot hope to establish

the broadest and most effective flow of needed services to the residents of the depressed areas. Without these services, we in the schools cannot hope to break the vicious cycle by which despair is passed on from generation to generation. While much social work must of necessity continue to be a picking up the pieces operation, this, effectively done, can purchase for the educator the precious years he needs to impress upon the child the skills and the aspirations which may lead to self-reliant adult living.

As we move forward with our program we have identified a number of new directions in which we think we need to move.

(a) the development of curricula and teaching techniques to foster the language development of the pre-school and kindergarten-age child and an expansion of the day care programs.

(b) flexible school programming to allow for the in-service training of teachers.

(c) the development of more suitable reading materials for urban lower class children.

(d) the development in the teacher training institutions of an inter-disciplinary approach to the preparation of the urban school teacher.

(e) the expansion of internship (clinical) opportunities for future teachers so that they begin to see the gray area community from different angles - the family service agency, juvenile court, the settlement house, etc.

(f) finding opportunities for the use of neighborhood residents in the school's program.

These six directions are basically education oriented. There are two other concerns having broader significance upon which I should like to comment: (1) it is our hope that cities might move to develop comprehensive social plans for the gray areas - investing in these the same energy, staff, money, and political commitment comparable to that now being given to the development of master physical plans. (2) that school construction programs, closely co-ordinated with housing redevelopment projects, be viewed as an opportunity to develop community schools, planned in co-operation with community agencies and citizens, which would furnish a neighborhood base for the provision of expanded, more closely integrated services to the gray area and its residents.

The obvious need for comprehensive social planning for the gray areas and the accelerated program of physical reconstruction of these neighborhoods presents, what seems to me, a great opportunity.

The bricks and mortar effort must not be allowed to grow without a similar growth of social planning by the people who will be concerned with the children and the adults once they get inside the new facilities.

If social planners with big ideas (for better programs) can make their voices heard in the councils of the physical planners, I would predict the development of enlightened programs bolstered by physical facilities which strengthen and enhance social programs.

One approach toward this broader effort might be through the development of community schools. The concept of the <u>community school</u> is not a

new one. It has its roots in the neighborhood based school which services all the children of the community. During the height of foreign immigration to this country, educators saw many other tasks a school could perform which could ease the adjustment of the new citizen to his new country. However, the community school idea faded in the thirties and only recently has there been any indication of serious effort to revive the idea.

What I should like to see is the decision on the part of Boards of Education to make all "gray area" schools - new, old, and those still to be built - into true community schools.

To do this would involve the active participation of four major groups of urban agencies - the Board of Education, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the people serving agencies which expend public funds in the gray areas, and the Health and Welfare Countil. These groups are not co-equal. Only three are in a position to commit funds and staffs on a long range basis to the effective planning and operation of community-based programs. The Health and Welfare Council is strategic, however, because it has the capacity for recommending to its member agencies participation and commitment to this program.

The basic commitment of each agency named would be as follows:

The Board of Education - (1) would select key school staff (Principal, community-coordinator, guidance coordinator) two years before the new community school is opened; (2) it would agree to plan the physical structure of the new school to follow as closely as possible the recommendations

of the planning group described above; (3) would keep the school staff free to participate actively and on a full time basis with the other agencies and citizens groups who will have a share in the community served by this school; (4) it would make available from its files the data needed by the other agencies to develop co-ordinated programs.

Housing and Redevelopment Authority - (1) would make available its community survey data to other agencies; (2) would adjust timetables and program objectives to more closely harmonize with the plans of the other agencies; (3) make its professional staff available to the planning group to consider physical plant requirements of the community school; (4) through planning, insure against major dislocation of population which would render null the specific planning of the agencies; (5) modify its construction plans to fit neighborhood needs as these are expressed by local citizens and agencies.

Public Agencies - (1) similarly make staff available for regular consultation and planning; (2) introduce new action programs for specific problems faced in these gray areas; (3) develop more flexible staffing practices to permit tie-in with other programs.

Health and Welfare Federation - (1) survey "gray areas" to discover which agencies are already making major commitments of time and staff in them; (2) develop inter-agency programs which give high priority to the areas; (3) insure, if possible, long term commitments from agencies to stay involved in the area.

What might result from such an effort?

1. A school would be built which would have facilities open and available for use by social agencies, health agencies, and interested citizen groups on a seven day a week, twelve months a year basis.

2. Staffs from any one agency would find new and significant roles to play in a number of new settings.

3. Much closer co-operation between schools and agencies would result.

4. Public agency support would be strongly felt by social workers from the private sector.

5. Fuller sharing of data would be facilitated.

6. A neighborhood base of operations for many centralized agencies would develop.

7. Closer contacts among citizens and agencies would develop.

8. Proventative programs could more easily be launched.

9. Each institution could establish a closer tie with its neighborhood.

10. A climate of mutual interest among agencies would develop which would aid the trial of new programs.

11. Through closer contact with many institutions and agencies, professionals would broaden their understanding, and develop more generalized skills than heretofore. Thus, a new breed of "generalists" might develop among social workers. This could correct the atomizing effects of the over specilization we are now recognizing.

12. Opportunities for observation of and communication with children and adults in a wide variety of situations would open.

13. All workers would develop a neighborhood "bias" rather than an agency bias.

Let me conclude with an anecdote. At a recent meeting in Harvard, I listened to the director of a Redevelopment Authority outline a massive rehabilitation and redevelopment program which would affect every neighborhood and district of the city. He spoke of building designs, real estate, population density, and the tax base. At the conclusion of his presentation he was asked if he had any plans for looking to the social needs of the people living in the deteriorated areas.

His answer, "I am a physical planner. I have a master plan and I must move quickly. Where is the social planner with his master plan for the city?"

The challenge is blunt, clear, and direct. I speaks to the long standing fact of fractionalized, diffused, overlapping, unco-ordinated, competitive, and wasteful social welfare efforts which characterize our cities in both the public and private sector.

What we must strive for is a new peak of efficient use of money, strategic deployment of staffs, imaginative program planning, and integration of effort of the public and private sector. As the schools move forward in the improvement of the education of the children of the gray areas, we fervently hope that this effort will mesh with other programs in a sustained, efficient and productive partnership.